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consumer

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EDITORIAL

At its sixth meeting held on 9 February 1960 the Consumer Council—the policy-forming body of the Service—approved the setting up of local consumer associations. This means that the full framework of the Service is now established. First the Council, then the four District Committees, and now the local associations to be formed of individual associate members of the Service.

Associations may be formed in any city, town or country district where twenty or more financial members of the Service are interested in grouping together to study consumer problems and actively help with the work of the Service.

The associations, which will be known by the name of the area in which the members live, will work directly with the District Committee for their area.

In the formal rules approved for the associations the Council has defined their aims and objects as:

(i) *To inform and represent to the District Consumer Committee for the area in which the Association is operating the views of its members on matters of interest and concern to consumers, and in particular to advise that Committee of the Association's views on all occasions when judicial, administrative or legislative actions which affect consumer welfare are being taken or considered.*
(ii) *To provide an opportunity for consumers to discuss their problems and matters of concern and interest to consumers generally and from these discussions to make the District Consumer Committee aware of consumers' suggestions, complaints and ideas for furthering consumer welfare.*

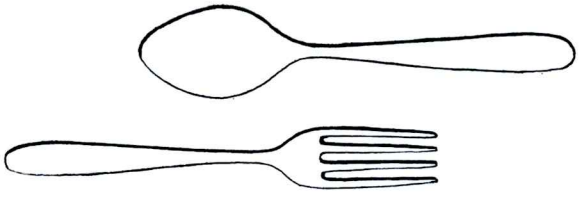
The rules provide that each association will elect from its members its own management committee.

On 24 February Wellington associate members met to form the first of the local associations. The attendance at this meeting and

the enthusiasm shown in forming the Consumer Association of Wellington were a promising start to the formation of active associations all working towards common goals.

As the strength of the consumer movement in New Zealand must lie in a broadly based active and informed membership the Council and the District Committees look forward to the formation of active progressive associations in all parts of the country.

Members interested in forming or joining associations in their districts are invited to get in touch with the national office of the Service in Wellington or their District Committees.



What does **EPNS A** *mean?*

Once the term 'A1' meant the plate would give 30–40 years' wear. Now—according to some experts—less than 7 years' wear can be expected from most 'A' or even 'A1' plate, if it is in regular domestic use. There is no legal definition of these terms and many years' attempts to establish a British Standard for EPNS have failed. The shopper should not be misled into supposing that 'A' or 'A1' plate is necessarily superior to plate not so marked.

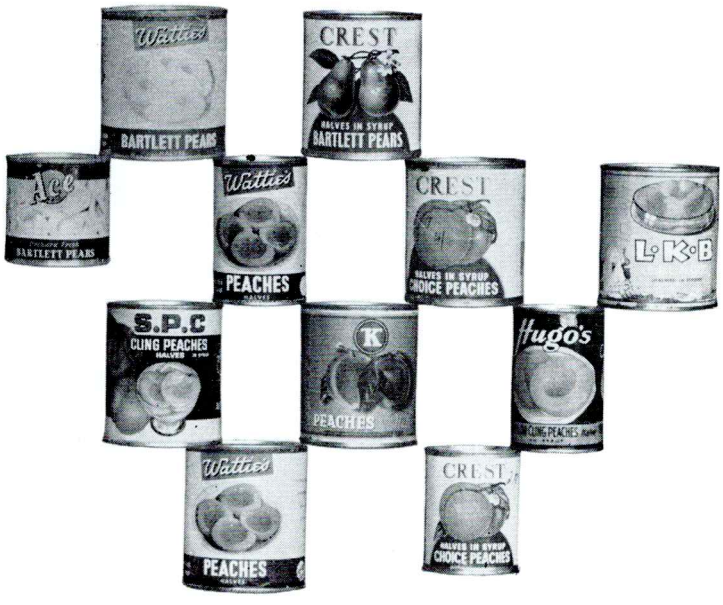
STOP PRESS

STANDARD LASTS FOR CHILDREN'S SHOES

Consumer Service *learns that the standard specification for lasts for children's footwear has been issued.*

The Standards Institute is sending advance copies to all shoe manufacturers so they can make standard lasts for submitting to the Lasts Approval Committee. Once the lasts have been approved there is nothing to stop manufacturers from producing children's shoes on the approved lasts.

Demand must come from consumers, so keep asking your retailer when he will have children's shoes made on approved lasts on his shelves.



canned fruit

The pilot check on canned pears in the Summer issue of *Consumer* has been followed up with tests carried out on seven brands of canned pears (three of them in two sizes) and six brands of canned peaches (two in two sizes). Ten cans of each brand were available for testing.

Consumer Service decided that the fruit should be bought over a wide area, with preferably not more than one can of each brand purchased from the same grocery store. This would help to ensure that the fruit came from different consignments. The four main centres were selected as the buying area because the maximum prices for New Zealand canned pears and peaches are identical in these areas.

In practice some modifications had to be made in the buying pattern. *Consumer Service* made its purchases during February, the in-between season for New Zealand canned fruit; last season's stocks were low and this season's were not yet ready. It appeared also that February was not a good period for overseas stocks. In one or two cases, for instance, *'Oak'* and *'K'*, distribution is always limited to certain areas. However, the pattern was followed as closely as possible.

The purchases were made for *Consumer Service* at the retail shop prices. Prices for New Zealand fruit were compared with the maximum price fixed by Trade Practices and Prices Division. All calculations were worked out on the controlled price. The price of imported pears and peaches is also controlled, on a formula allowing 20 per cent markup on the net cost to the retailer. As the retail price could vary for different consignments, *Consumer Service* used the average price of the sample cans of each brand in its calculations on imported fruit.

Specific tests carried out were:

net weight of contents
net weight of fruit
percentage of sugar in syrup

Observations were made on:

colour of fruit
uniformity of size
condition of cans
defects in fruit

The condition of the cans was generally good, and the defects noted had not affected the fruit.

The flavour of the fruit was not judged, this being considered a matter of personal preference. However, the fruit was tasted to see that it was not unpalatable.

PEARS

Crest
Ace
Gold Bond
'K'
Oak
Watties
S.P.C.

Pears are sold in halves, quarters, and, occasionally, in chunks, this last being a method of using otherwise unusable fruit. All the pears tested by *Consumer Service* were halves, and all with one exception were Bartlett pears. The type of pear used in *Gold Bond* was not named on the can. Seven brands of pears were tested (three brands in two sizes). All were canned in New Zealand except *S.P.C.* 29 oz, which was canned in Australia.

PRICE

All the New Zealand pears should have been bought at or under the maximum controlled price. Of the 90 tins purchased, 51 were bought at the controlled price, 17 at above the controlled price and 22 under the maximum controlled price. This last includes the four cans of *Gold Bond* bought at the 'special' price of 2/6d.

The price table below shows for each brand (except for *S.P.C.*, Australian) the controlled price, the highest and lowest prices paid for the fruit, and the average price. A second check was made to ensure that a Wellington grocery store really did intend to sell *Gold Bond* at 3/8½d. The grocer maintained this was the correct price.

Brand	Net Weight	Controlled Price	Highest Price Paid	Lowest Price Paid	Average Price
Crest	30 oz	4/–	4/4	4/–	4/0½
Ace	30 oz	3/11	4/–	3/8	3/9
Gold Bond	30 oz	2/7	3/8½	2/6	2/9
'K'	30 oz	3/11	4/–	3/8½	3/10¼
Oak	30 oz	4/1	4/2	3/9½	3/11½
Watties	29 oz	3/8½	3/9	3/5	3/8¼
S.P.C.	29 oz	4/7*	4/8½	4/4	4/7
Crest	16 oz	2/6	2/8	2/6	2/6
Ace	16 oz	2/3½	2/6	2/3	2/3½
Watties	16 oz	2/3½	2/10	2/3½	2/4

*Average price

THE TEST

The actual net weight of the contents of each can of pears was noted and compared with the declared weight marked on the can. The fruit was drained through a sieve (eight inches in diameter, eight meshes to the inch) for exactly two minutes, and weighed. The percentage of sugar in the fruit syrup was calculated. The condition of each can, inside and outside, was examined. Observations were made on the quality of the fruit; this covered colour (creamy–white was taken as a 'very good' colour), uniformity of colour (the number of halves deviating in colour were noted for each can), uniformity of size and defects.

RESULTS

In five brands the actual net weight of the contents was equal to or above the net weight stated on the can.

In *'K'* 30 oz the contents of four out of the ten cans weighed slightly under the stated weight. In *Gold Bond* 30 oz two cans weighed slightly under the stated weight, and one can each of *Ace* 30 oz, *Watties* 29 oz and *Ace* 16 oz were slightly under the weight marked on the can.

The drained weight of the fruit, as shown in the accompanying table, was averaged over the ten cans, but variations between cans of the same brand and size are commented on in the text.

PEARS	*Crest* 30 oz	*Ace* 30 oz	*Gold Bond* 30 oz	*'K'* 30 oz	*Oak* 30 oz	*Watties* 29 oz	*S.P.C.* 29 oz	*Crest* 16 oz	*Ace* 16 oz	*Watties* 16 oz
Average drained weight of fruit content oz	16.3	20.5	15.6	18.7	15.7	17.8	17.0	9.2	9.9	9.9
Percentage of fruit content to declared net weight	54	68	52	62	52	61	58	57	62	62
Percentage of sugar in syrup	17	16	16–17	19–20	20	18–20	15	18	16–18	18
Price per can (controlled)	4/–	3/11	2/7	3/11	4/1	3/8½	4/7*	2/6	2/3½	2/3½
Price per lb of fruit content	3/11	3/0¾	2/7¾	3/4¼	4/2	3/4	4/4	4/4¼	3/8½	3/8½

* Average price

FRUIT CONTENT

Variations between brands

Even in brands marked with the same net weight the average drained weight of fruit varied a good deal. The highest average percentage of fruit was in *Ace* 30 oz, with fruit comprising 68% of the average contents, and the lowest percentage of fruit was in *Oak* 30 oz and *Gold Bond* 30 oz, in which just over half (52%) of the average contents was fruit.

Variations within brands

The average fruit content of each brand conceals, of course, the variations in fruit content between cans of the same brand and size. *Ace* 30 oz and *Watties* 16 oz showed least variation from can to can. The *Ace* 30 oz can with the most fruit had only 1¼ ounces more fruit than the can with the least fruit. In *Watties* 16 oz the difference was 1½ ounces. On the other hand, there was a difference of 4 ounces in the weight of fruit in *'K'* brand, 3¾ ounces in *S.P.C.* 29 oz, and 3¼ in *Oak* 30 oz. For the rest the differences were under three ounces.

SYRUP STRENGTH

The percentage of sugar in the syrup was obtained by measuring the density of the syrup with a hydrometer. As the degree of sweetness is a matter of personal preference the results are shown for the interest of readers but are not taken into account in the final assessments.

OBSERVATIONS ON QUALITY

Uniformity of size

The New Zealand-packed pears were uneven in size in every can. The Australian pears, *S.P.C.* 29 oz, were much more uniform in size; this is one of the stipulations for Australian export fruit laid down in the Commonwealth Food Specification.

Colour

White or creamy-white was taken to be a 'very good' colour for Bartlett pears. Those that were slightly off-white or yellow-white are described as 'good'.

Six brands were classed as 'very good' in colour—*Ace* 30 oz and 16 oz, *Watties* 29 oz and 16 oz, *Oak* 30 oz, and *'K'* 30 oz. Of these six brands the first four were very uniform in colour; the other two brands moderately uniform. *Crest* 16 oz pears were considered to be a 'good' colour and also uniform in colour.

Nine cans each of *Crest* 30 oz and *S.P.C.* 29 oz were a 'good' colour. The tenth can of *Crest* 30 oz was uniformly pink in colour and the tenth can of *S.P.C.* 29 oz contained three pinkish halves.

Gold Bond 30 oz (the only pear that was not of the Bartlett variety) had seven cans of 'average' colour, the other three being slightly pinkish.

Defects

These were taken to include pieces of stone, skin, trimming, bruises, spots and broken halves.

Ace 16 oz and *Watties* 16 oz had no defects. Nine cans of *Ace* 30 oz had no defects, but the contents of the tenth were rather soft. *Crest* 30 oz, *Watties* 29 oz, *S.P.C.* 29 oz and *Crest* 16 oz had between seven and eight cans without defect. In each case the defects consisted of pieces of skin. *'K'* and *Oak* each had four cans with defects; in both cases one can contained trimmed fruit, and three, a piece of skin. All cans of *Gold Bond* contained trimmed fruit and one can contained three pieces of skin.

None of the fruit tasted was unpleasant, though there was no attempt to rate the brands according to flavour.

Summing up on quality, *Ace* 16 oz and *Watties* 16 oz excelled in colour and uniformity of colour, and there was a complete absence of defects. *Ace* 30 oz and *Watties* 29 oz equalled their smaller sizes in colour and uniformity of colour, but one can of *Ace* 30 oz was rather soft and three cans of *Watties* 29 oz contained a small piece of skin.

VALUE FOR MONEY

The price paid per lb of fruit content was calculated on the average fruit content in each brand and on the maximum price fixed by the Trade Practices and Prices Division. In the case of *S.P.C.* the average price was used.

If the most fruit for the lowest price is the sole criterion, *Gold Bond* 30 oz, despite the high quantity of syrup in the can, is the best buy. Its cheapness, however, must be weighed against the defects in the quality of the fruit.

The second cheapest brand per pound of fruit content is *Ace* 30 oz. Its quality was very good in all respects in nine out of ten cans (the contents of the tenth were rather soft). There was little variation in the weight of fruit from can to can.

Following *Ace* 30 oz in cost per pound of fruit content were *Watties* 29 oz and *'K'* 30 oz. *Watties* 29 oz came very well out of the quality tests, apart from a minor defect in each of three out of the 10 cans. Although *'K'* pears had a higher average fruit content than *Watties* it also had a greater variability in fruit content (a difference of 4 ounces between the can with the most and the can with the least fruit). The buyer is getting very good value if he strikes the can with 20¼ ounces but less value if his is the can with only 16¼ ounces. Three cans of *'K'* contained one piece of skin, and a fourth three trimmed pieces of fruit.

The other three large-size brands, *Crest, Oak* and *S.P.C.*, all cost more per pound of fruit, without real compensating advantages of quality, although *S.P.C.* pears are actually more uniform in size.

The three 16 oz cans tested were in every case dearer per pound of fruit than their own larger size. *Ace* 16 oz and *Watties* 16 oz came out very well in the quality observations (there were no defects noted, for instance, in either brand) and were, in fact, cheaper per pound of fruit than the 30 ounce size of *Crest, Oak,* or *S.P.C. Crest* 16 oz was the dearest per pound of fruit content of the ten brands tested. For some people the 16 oz is the most convenient size, and this could outweigh the additional expense. Consumers should keep in mind, however, if the fruit is to be used over two or three days that of the brands tested, one 30 oz can is a better buy per pound of fruit than two 16 oz cans of the same brand.

PEACHES

Crest

'K'

L.K.B.

Watties

S.P.C.

Hugo

Canned peaches are sold in halves, quarters, slices and chunks. *Consumer Service* tested six brands of peach halves, which with one exception were of the 'Clingstone' type. The exception, *L.K.B.* (South African), was marked 'Freestone'. Of the three New Zealand brands, *Watties, Crest* and *'K'*, the first two were tested in the 16 oz as well as the larger size. Of the three overseas brands, two were South African (*L.K.B.* 30 oz and *Hugo* 16 oz) and one (*S.P.C.* 29 oz) Australian.

PRICE

The maximum controlled price of the five New Zealand brands, and the highest, lowest and average prices paid by *Consumer Service* for the eight brands is set out in the table below.

Brand	Net Weight	Controlled Price	Highest Price Paid	Lowest Price Paid	Average Price
Crest	30 oz	4/4	4/5½	4/2	4/3½
'K'	30 oz	4/1	4/2	3/11	4/0½
L.K.B.	30 oz	4/3½*	4/4	4/–	4/3½
Watties	29 oz	4/2	4/3	3/8½	4/1½
S.P.C.	29 oz	4/11½*	5/–	4/11½	4/11½
Crest	16 oz	2/9	2/9	2/9	2/9
Watties	16 oz	2/7	2/8½	2/7	2/7¼
Hugo	16 oz	2/8¾*	2/9½	2/8½	2/8¾

* Average Price

Only in the case of one brand, *Crest* 16 oz, were all 10 cans of New Zealand peaches sold to *Consumer Service* at the maximum controlled price. Of the 50 cans of New Zealand peaches, 40 were bought at or under the maximum controlled price, and 10 above. In none of the ten cases was the price paid more than 1½d. above the maximum controlled price; this is in contrast to pears where one can was 1/1½d. above the maximum price, and others ranged from ½d. to 6½d. above.

The scarcity of overseas peaches at the time of purchase meant that the original purchasing pattern could not be adhered to and market variations in price that might have existed were concealed.

THE TESTS

Similar tests were carried out for peaches as for pears. The accompanying table is drawn up on the same lines as for pears:

PEACHES	*Crest* 30 oz	*'K'* 30 oz	*L.K.B.* 30 oz	*Watties* 29 oz	*S.P.C.* 29 oz	*Crest* 16 oz	*Watties* 16 oz	*Hugo* 16 oz
Average drained weight of fruit content, oz	19.35	19.13	18.35	19.80	18.90	10.80	11.15	11.00
Percentage of fruit content to declared net weight	65	64	61	68	65	68	70	69
Percentage of sugar in syrup	20	20	22	20	16	20	20	22
Price per can (controlled)	4/4	4/1	4/3½*	4/2	4/11½*	2/9	2/7	2/8¾
Price per pound of fruit content	3/7	3/5	3/9	3/4½	4/2½	4/1	3/8½	3/11½

* Average price.

WEIGHT

The actual net weight of the contents of each can was compared with the net weight marked on the cans. In five brands the actual weight was equal to or above the declared weight.

In *'K'* 30 oz, the contents of 8 out of 10 cans weighed between 29 and 29¾ oz, 1 weighed 30 oz, and 1 30¼ oz. In *Crest* 16 oz, 8 cans weighed between 15 and 15¾ oz, one weighed 16 oz and one 16¼ oz. One can of *Watties* 16 oz weighed ¼ oz short.

FRUIT CONTENT

Variations between brands

Taking the average for all the tins, *Watties* 16 oz had the highest percentage of fruit, followed by *Hugo* 16 oz and *Watties* 29 oz. The variation in average fruit content was not so great between the different brands of peaches as with pears.

Variations within brands

Fruit content varied considerably between cans of the same brand. The greatest variation occurred in the case of *Crest* 30 oz, where there was a difference of 5¾ ounces between the can with the most fruit and the can with the least fruit. This was followed by *Watties* 29 oz with a difference of 3¾ ounces and *Crest* and *Watties* 16 oz with a difference of 2¾ ounces.

SYRUP STRENGTH

As with pears, this is shown merely for the interest of readers. The percentage of sugar in the syrup tested was, apart from *S.P.C.* Australian, fairly uniform.

OBSERVATIONS ON QUALITY

Uniformity of size

It was noted that the New Zealand canned peaches were uneven in size in every can. This was true also of *L.K.B.* (South African). It was noted that some of the halves in *Watties* 29 oz cans were very thin across. The Australian *S.P.C.* peach halves were uniform in size. So was the South African brand, *Hugo*.

Colour

Two brands only, *Crest* 30 oz and *Hugo* 16 oz, were considered to be the rich golden colour that would qualify for 'very good'. The other five Clingstone brands were classed as 'good'. *L.K.B.*, the Freestone peach, was found very pale; this is no criticism in itself as Freestone peaches are typically of a yellow or pale yellow colour. As only one brand of Freestone peach was tested it is not possible to rate its colour relatively.

In all brands the colour of the peach halves in each can was uniform.

Defects

No defects were noted in *Crest* 30 oz and 16 oz, *Watties* 16 oz, *S.P.C.* 29 oz, and *Hugo* 16 oz.

Both *'K'* 30 oz and *Watties* 29 oz had trimmed fruit in one can. *L.K.B.* 30 oz South African came out poorly in this test. The fruit was very soft, a few halves were bruised and several halves were trimmed.

To sum up, the two sizes of *Crest*, *Watties* 16 oz, *S.P.C.* 30 oz and *Hugo* 16 oz all came out of the observations very well, although the New Zealand fruit was uneven in size. In colour, *Crest* 30 oz and *Hugo* 16 oz were considered the best. *'K'* 30 oz and *Watties* 29 oz were good, apart from the presence of some trimmed fruit. *L.K.B.* did not come out well in the quality observations.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Watties 29 oz, followed closely by *'K'* 30 oz, were the cheapest brands per pound of fruit content. Even when the price was calculated for all cans of each brand with the least fruit, *'K'* and *Watties*, in that order, came out cheapest. Both brands had a good colour and nine out of ten cans were free of defects. (The tenth in both cases contained trimmed fruit).

Crest 30 oz was considered to have a 'very good' colour and no cans contained defects. However, at 3/7 a pound it was 2d. dearer per pound of fruit than *'K'* 30 oz and 2½d. dearer than *Watties* 30 oz. Again, there was greater variation in the weight of fruit between the cans of *Crest*. For the can of *Crest* 30 oz with the least peach (15¾ ounces) the price per pound of fruit was 4/4¾ compared with 3/7½ for *'K'* 30 oz and 3/9 for Watties 29 oz.

The 16 oz size of *Watties* and *Crest* cost more per pound of actual fruit than the larger size of their own brands.

Of the imported brands, *S.P.C.* was most expensive, both per can and per lb of solid fruit. This brand came out well in the quality observations but not better (apart from uniformity of size) than some New Zealand brands. *L.K.B.* was the poorest in quality but dearer per lb of fruit content than four other brands. *Hugo* 16 oz, dearer per lb than *Watties* 16 oz, but cheaper than *Crest*, was very good in quality.

Conclusions

These tests showed variations between brands, in price, fruit content and quality.

Perhaps just as interesting were the variations between cans of the same brand.

These tests confirmed the view of *Consumer Service* that it is necessary to have minimum standards laid down. A standard specification would, for instance, specify the amount of fruit to be packed into each size of can and the allowable margins.

The New Zealand fruit tested was very uneven in size. Uniformity of size is specified in a number of overseas standards and in drawing up a standard specification the extent to which uniformity in size is desirable should be considered.

The minimum percentage of sugar in the syrup should also be determined. It was noticed that the syrup strength was less in some New Zealand peaches and pears than specified in certain overseas standards.

In some of the brands tested one or two only out of the ten cans tested were not up to standard of the rest. A minimum standard, perhaps for more than one grade of each fruit, should guard against this.

The single overseas brand of pears, *S.P.C.*, was both dearer per pound of fruit than any New Zealand brand except *Crest* 16 oz, and not superior in any important respect. Of the four brands of peaches that were dearest per pound of fruit, three were imported. No South African first and second grade fruit (marked 'Fancy' and 'Choice' grades), which has a high reputation, was available in satisfactory quantities for testing.

An interesting sidelight to the tests is the fact that the maximum prices fixed for canned fruits are not being strictly observed. This can be seen from the price tables. Obviously it will pay buyers to know the maximum prices and see they are not overcharged.

Heating

Heating a house can be done in so many ways today that it is difficult to decide what will be the cheapest, most efficient and most satisfying type of heater to use.

The obvious purpose of any heater is to provide conditions which the individual finds comfortable. But other factors as well as temperature influence the winter comfort in a house.

The amount of moisture in the air (humidity) directly affects heating. If the air is too dry you will need a higher temperature to feel comfortable. Also the extent of draughts and ventilation will affect the heat required. Electric, gas and large oil heaters will dry the air. Kerosene heaters keep the air too moist because for each pint of fuel burned about a pint of water is re-

	Installation	*Capital Cost*	*Comparative Initial Capital Cost per Kilowatt*
THE OPEN FIRE	fixed	high	high
THE CONVECTOR OPEN FIRE	fixed	high	high
THE 'SLOW COMBUSTION' STOVE	fixed	high	medium
THE GAS RADIATOR	fixed and semi-fixed	medium	low
THE GAS CONVECTOR	fixed	medium	medium
THE KEROSENE HEATER	semi-portable	low	high
THE OIL FUEL HEATER	fixed	very high	medium
THE ELECTRIC RADIATOR	portable	very low	very low
THE ELECTRIC CONVECTOR	semi-portable	low	medium
THE ELECTRIC HEATER-BLOWER	portable	low	medium
THE ELECTRIC UNDER-CARPET HEATER	fixed	medium	high
THE ELECTRIC OIL FILLED RADIATOR	semi-portable	medium	very high

Note: 1 Therm = 100,000 British Thermal Units
1 Kilowatt-hour = 3,415 British Thermal Units
Most one-bar electric radiators are 1 Kilowatt

House

leased into the air. Open fires encourage draughts because of the very large volume of air taken up the chimney which must be replaced. This process does provide ventilation but not efficient heating. This disadvantage can to some extent be overcome with slow combustion fires and stoves.

Gas, kerosene, or oil fuel heating appliances which are not connected to flues discharge the products of combustion into the air in the house.

There can be no general statement on the best way to heat a house. Personal preference plays a large part in any decision but the comparison in the following table of some aspects of different types of heaters may be helpful.

Comparative Running Costs Per Therm s. d.	*Disadvantages*	*Special Advantages*	*Comparative Efficiency*
5 6	Draughts, cleaning		very low
{ 2 4½ / 2 1 }	Draughts, cleaning		low
{ 1 10 / 1 3½ }	Cleaning	Better controlled solid fuel combustion	medium
6 3½	Dries air		medium
4 2½	Space required	Low maintenance	high
1 9	Fire hazard Releases carbon dioxide and moisture into room	Independent of gas and electricity mains	very high
{ 1 3 / 1 5½ }	Large installations only	Heats whole house	high
2 5	Dries air, Fire hazard		very high
2 5	Space required		very high
2 5	Fans may be noisy	Fan for summer	very high
2 5	Requires special installation	Even heating	very high
2 5	Low power for large size	Extreme safety	very high

The bracketed figures for the convector open fire and the slow combustion stove indicate the range of cost for the varying efficiencies of these appliances, and the oil fuel heater costs vary with type of oil used. These figures are based on prices ruling in the Wellington area, and will be subject to variations in different parts of the country.

wall can openers

A wall can opener is permanently 'at the ready'. If you open many cans, it is less tiring to use and does not need a strong grip; moreover, it will cut effortlessly across the seam of a can.

To use—you insert the rim of the can beneath the cutter, pull a lever to hold the can in position, turn a handle to cut, then release the lever and remove the can.

In the United Kingdom the Consumer Advisory Council carried out practical tests on four widely distributed makes. Five operators used all four openers, each machine opening 100 cans of varying shapes and sizes—26 in a straight run, the rest intermittently.

Consumer Service went the rounds of Wellington shops and found three of the four tested available in various stores at the present time. These were the R.D. at 18/9d., the Nutbrown at 27s. 6d. and the Prestige at 46/-. It is understood that the Bulldog is also available in New Zealand from time to time.

The Results of the U.K. Test

BULLDOG (*15/9 in the United Kingdom*). Strong alloy frame, with cutting knife. Rigid, easy to start, use and clean. The lever had to be held when opening straight sided tins, and its shortness was found a little awkward. The makers guarantee 5,000 cuts before renewal is needed. (*Ogdens, 79 Beech Lane, Macclesfield.*)

R.D. (*17/6 in the United Kingdom*). A casting, with cutting wheel turned by friction. Can be adjusted to suit different rims, and has a spring that adjusts the cutter as it goes round if the rim varies slightly in depth. Very firm, easy to start, use and clean. The only difficulty experienced was with some extremely narrow tins of anchovies. (*Rudman Darlington, Clyde Works, Wednesfield, Staffs.*)

NUTBROWN (*23/9 in the United Kingdom*). Light plated metal frame, cutting wheel driven by cogs, and spring-adjusted. Fixing to the wall was considered awkward and not firm enough, while putting the can in position and starting cutting was not always easy. Cutting was easy and smooth, but cleaning involved removing one part from the rest. (*Nutbrowns, Walker Street, Blackpool.*)

PRESTIGE (*39/6 in the United Kingdom*). Chromium plated frame, cutting wheel driven by cogs. Fixing was considered awkward and not firm enough. Positioning the can and starting to cut were easy, so was the rest of the operation. A magnet holds the lid when removed. Cleaning was easy. But this opener would not handle square tins. (*The Prestige Group, 14 Holborn, London, E.C.1.*)

Consumer Service's check on availability incidentally emphasised the value of 'shopping around' before making a purchase. One store was selling the R.D. for 20/6, another for 19/6, and yet another for 18/9. A Japanese opener being sold in a nationally established chain store for 7/11 was being sold for 8/11 in one store and 16/11 in another.

Several other openers were also found on the market. Except for a well known United States opener now being made under licence in Australia these other openers did not bear any indication of country of origin or manufacturers' names.

Consumer Service would be interested in hearing of members' experiences with wall can openers.

General Notes

There should be no need to hold the can while it is being cut, but in one case—the Bulldog—the lever sometimes has to be held down whilst the handle is turned.

Each opener fixes to the wall by means of a plate into which it slides—and it can be removed for cleaning occasionally. The Nutbrown and Prestige ones will fold flat when not in use.

Some have a cutting wheel, and one a blade; neither method seemed superior to the other (possibly a wheel may last longer than a blade). There are two wheel types. In one case, the wheel operates by friction while a cog wheel turns the can. In the other, the wheel itself is operated by cogs. The former needed cleaning more, the latter appeared to be stronger but was sometimes a little more difficult to get started. It seems that it is not the cutter, but the cog wheels that may be the first part to wear out, if not properly cleaned and oiled.

None of these machines will open rimless cans (e.g., evaporated milk), nor ones with sealed edges (e.g., some brands of corned beef).

All cut easily (once in position) and left smooth edges—but getting them going was, in some cases, difficult.

As the notes show, some were more rigid than others, one would not handle oblong tins, only one was adjustable to suit different depths of rim.

GIRLS AND BOYS! BUY AT REID'S AND TAKE UP TO 2 YEARS TO PAY!

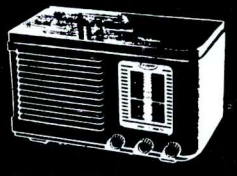
That's Proof of our Faith in Waikato Youth

We invite Girls and Boys of 15 and over to buy at Reid's any goods in the Store from £1 to £50 in value and pay in easy weekly instalments over arranged periods up to 2 years

Some suggestions for buying on Reid's "JUNIOR CREDIT" PLAN!

Bicycle (Men's or Women's) for Yourself!

An Electric Cleaner for Mum!



A Radio for Your Own Room!

Motor Mower for Dad!

A Sun Umbrella for Beach or Garden!

A Writing Desk for Yourself!

Tent or Camping Gear Summer Holidays!

An 8-Day Mantel Clock for your Home!

A Portable Record-Player for Parties!

JUNIOR CREDIT

What it is!

At your age, maybe wages are not very big. Well, not big enough for you to save sufficient money right now to buy some of the things you need or would like to have. Come then to Reid's. Buy what you want and pay for it by easy weekly instalments . . . just as do thousands of parents of Waikato girls and boys. Buy on JUNIOR CREDIT, now introduced for the first time in New Zealand by Reid's of Hamilton. Come into the Store. Make your purchase. Then, on the first weekly payment, you take the goods away. They're yours. So buy for yourself, for Mum, for Dad . . . on REID'S JUNIOR CREDIT PLAN. You'll see down below how easy the weekly payments are. And you'll find us ready to help in this grand scheme so that you girls and boys can buy in the same way as do your Mothers and Fathers.

How it works!

Offered with complete faith in Waikato Youth by Waikato's Greatest Store which pioneered local time payment trading

REID'S ALWAYS LEAD!

"JUNIOR CREDIT" IS EASY AND PRACTICAL

Our JUNIOR CREDIT PLAN is store-wide. That means you can buy any goods in any department . . . b Radios, Electrical Appliances, Bicycles, Tents, Camping Gear, Crockery, Glassware, Cutlery, Handbags, Towe Blankets, Christmas Gifts, Furniture . . . anything, in fact, in Reid's Big Store. And it's yours to take aw when you've made your first weekly payment. The Table below shows what you pay every week for orde of various amounts. Pay out of wages if you're working, or out of what you earn for odd jobs here and the It's simple, isn't it?

What an Easy Way to Pay!

Amount of Order	Weekly Payments	Amount of Order	Weekly Payments
Up to £5	1/3	£18/-/-	4/-
£6/10/-	1/6	£20/-/-	4/6
£7/10/-	1/9	£21/10/-	4/9
£8/15/-	2/-	£23/-/-	5/-
£10/-/-	2/3	£25/-/-	5/6
£11/5/-	2/6	£27/10/-	6/-
£12/10/-	2/9	£30/10/-	6/9
£13/10/-	3/-	£36/-/-	8/-
£15/-/-	3/3	£40/-/-	8/9
£16/-/-	3/6	£50/-/-	11/-

ANYTHING, IN FACT, STOCKED IN THE BIG STORE!

SO, GIRLS AND BOYS, BUY ANY GOODS IN ANY DEPARTMENT AND PAY THIS EASY WAY!

REID'S FURNISHINGS LTD.

WAIKATO'S GREATEST STORE
11-21 COLLINGWOOD ST., HAMILTON

CREDIT FOR JUNIORS

The Invitation

Buy on Junior Credit now introduced for the first time in New Zealand by Reid's of Hamilton.

So boys and girls of 15 years and over are invited through a full page advertisement in the *Waikato Times* to take advantage of this 'Junior Credit' offer. Any goods in the shop from £1 up to £50 can be paid for in weekly instalments ranging from 1/3 to 11/- per week over a period of up to two years.

'On the first weekly payment you take the goods away. They're yours.'

The advertisement suggests several purchases to juniors. These include an electric cleaner 'for Mum', a motor mower 'for Dad', a radio 'for your own room' and a portable record player 'for parties'.

These goods can be paid out of 'your wages if you're working, or out of what you earn for odd jobs here and there'. So runs the invitation.

The Acceptance

Is this invitation as easy to accept as it sounds? We understand that it is. Juniors can sign up, pay the first instalment and take the goods away. No enquiries about their parents' consent or even knowledge of the purchase, nor their own financial position, are made.

The Reaction—*Is it right?*

Immediate doubts rise about the morality of telling adolescents that hire purchase goods are *theirs* on the first payment; about the desirability of asking juniors to make purchases, perhaps unknown to their parents, or against their parents' wishes; and about the dubious economics of suggesting they pay out of their odd jobs, when the essence of hire purchase payment is regularity of payment.

The Juniors' Obligations

After going into the fairly complex legal position on contracts with juniors, *Consumer Service* concludes that Reid's may be virtually right in their assertion—'Pay the first instalment and the goods *are yours.*'

Unless the goods can be classed as *necessaries* (and proved so in the courts) no junior can have a contract enforced against him. It is difficult to believe that the goods suggested in Reid's advertisements are *necessaries,* and in legal jargon, 'suitable to the station in life of the infant and necessary to maintain him in that station'. It seems clear that a boy or girl could refuse to continue payment on the type of purchases suggested by Reid's.

The Parents' Position

Normally the parents would be under no liability. Even if they have given their consent to the contract or even guaranteed payment, they have no liability. To be liable the parents must actually be a party to the contract itself as principals.

Can the Goods be Taken Back?

Under hire purchase agreements contracted by adults a firm can take back the goods, even entering the purchaser's premises and if necessary 'breaking open all gates and doors whether exterior or interior' to recover the goods. Firms cannot do this when it is juniors who break their hire purchase agreement. The vendor must take the boy or girl to law seeking an order for the return of the goods. If this is given the junior has still the normal recourse to further legal action for compensation for money already paid.

A Good Commercial Practice?

Most juniors who enter into hire purchase agreements either with or without their parents' consent probably complete their payments. But there are some who are drawn into irresponsible buying through this sort of invitation, and as minors they are entitled to protection. *Consumer Service* has heard of adolescents who, for the price of a small deposit, have over-committed themselves, sometimes at more than one shop at a time (these were not at Reid's). Youngsters, harried by firms for payments and not knowing they can break the contract, may take unwise measures to get the money. Again others may relinquish partly paid-for goods unaware that the firm can recover these only through court action. Firms often go to the child's parents, who may be hearing of the purchase for the first time. To save the family face, and not knowing of their lack of liability in law, parents may take on their child's payments at considerable distress to themselves.

If this practice of junior credit is to continue it is in the public interest that the limitations of contracts with juniors are widely known. It follows that in their own interests firms ought to make reasonably sure that adolescents who want to enter into hire purchase agreements can keep up regular payments; and they would be wise to make sure of the parents' consent—though parents should know that legally they are not liable for their infants' debts.

The Service's view

Consumer Service condemns strongly junior credit schemes and any other credit devices which might tempt minors to get into debt unknown to their parents.

We would equally condemn any young person who deliberately incurred a debt of this nature and then invoked the law after enjoying possession of the goods purchased.

Nevertheless the very fact that the law provides this special protection for minors is a clear indication that the public conscience is opposed to this form of trading.

Parents should strongly advise their children not to be tempted by such offers and firms should respect the obvious intention of the law.

The task of becoming an intelligent consumer has become ever more difficult because of the anarchistic nature of the American market, the spectacular development of new products and the pervasive influence of advertising. The consumer is asked to choose wisely under circumstances which often baffle even the trained technician. He is faced with product differentiation, brand differentiation, model differentiation, price differentiation. He is offered bonuses of extraneous products for purchasing. He is faced with trading stamps, special discounts and trade-ins. Products are sold in varying quantities and in containers often deceptive to the eye. Familiar products often emerge possessed of magical ingredients concocted by puffery. In the absence of adequate quality control, the buyer is not infrequently confronted with divergent qualities captioned under a single brand label.

To this difficult situation is added the ingredient of easy credit terms which immeasurably complicate purchasing decisions. The untutored buyer is faced with the problem of estimating the cost of time payments extending over a period of years and is confronted with a maze of interest, insurance and carrying charges which he scarcely comprehends. Little wonder that consumption for many consumers has become a 'backward art'.

COLSTON E. WARNE

President of Consumers' Union, U.S.A.

Consumer Service says to small savers —get expert advice before investing your money at high rates of interest

Are high interest returns always safe?

If your money is deposited in an institution which bears the title BANK you can be certain that it is absolutely safe and available to you at the end of the term for which it is deposited. Trading practices of savings and trading banks in New Zealand have over the years resulted in banks becoming so soundly established that there is no likelihood of failure. In addition to this, legislation governing the conduct of banking is a further guarantee of safety.

This absolute assurance of safety does not exist for those who merely deposit money with a commercial trading concern which is not a bank, in the hope of securing a lucrative return. If such a company fails the investor runs the risk of losing part or the whole of the money he has deposited.

THE STATUS OF
A MERE DEPOSITOR
IS THAT OF AN
UNSECURED CREDITOR

Unsecured creditors rank well down the list when the liabilities of a bankrupt company are being met. The following would all be paid before unsecured creditors receive any dividend:

Cost incurred in winding-up
Commission of the assignee
PAYE deductions outstanding
Sales tax unpaid
Wages owing to employees
Secured creditors
(to the extent specific security covers the secured debt)

Many companies are accepting deposits from small savers at much higher rates of interest than those offered by banks. Where savings banks offer from 2½ to 3 per cent and trading banks 2 to 3½ per cent a Wellington group of companies advertised these rates:

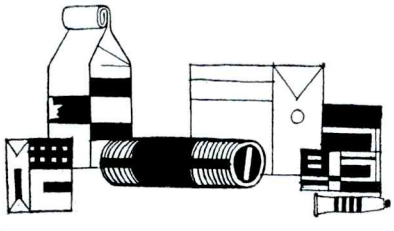
One month's call	6%	per year
Three months' call	8%	,, ,,
Two years' call	9%	,, ,,
Four years' call	10%	,, ,,

In view of the risk run by depositors *Consumer Service* endorses the advice recently given by the Stock Exchange Association that people should consult a member of the stock exchange, a banker, a solicitor or public accountant before accepting offers of high rates of interest from any source.

Consumer Service considers *expert* advice essential because some of the advertising seeking deposits gives insufficient information to enable the normal small investor to assess adequately the position of the company.

Consumer Service does not say that investments offering high rates of interest are necessarily unwise, but it should be remembered that high rates of interest are usually paid to compensate for inconvenience caused to an investor or the extent of risk he takes in his investment.

The Consumer Council is making representations to the Government about the general matters raised in this article.



Need packaging put up prices ?

The British Productivity Council in a report on packaging, found examples of packaging increasing sales to such an extent that the extra cost was fully offset; while a baker saved so much by not having to wrap things up at the counter that he was able to reduce his prices. On the other hand, in one check it was found that packaged groceries were being sold at anything from 3½ per cent to 63 per cent *more* than their loose equivalents.

HUGE WATCH SCOOP!

SAVE POUNDS AND POUNDS

STUPENDOUS

EXPANDING WATCH BRACELET with this watch if required ... al Reduced Price 9/11 Each

No. 1: WORLD-FAMOUS BRAND LATEST-STYLE MAN'S WRIST WATCH. 17-jewelled lever movement, super stainless steel case, or rolled gold and stainless steel if preferred; double screw back; certified 100% waterproof; shockproof; anti-magnetic; electronically timed for accuracy; beautifully styled; sweep second hand; luminous if required; unbreakable mainspring. This lovely precision watch fully guaranteed (written guarantee) for 10 years. SPECIAL GIVE-AWAY PRICE—Incabloc if required. ABSOLUTELY UNREPEATABLE! £8/10/-

LADIES' WORLD-FAMOUS BRAND 17-LED DAINTY WRIST WATCH. Latest ith beautiful corded bracelet, fully guar-anteed. Written guarantee 10 years. SPECIAL GIVE-AWAY PRICE— £8/10/-

No. 2: A Fine Selection of WATCHES FOR LADIES, MEN, BOYS, GIRLS, NURSES, SPORTSMEN. Fully guaranteed, written guar-antee 5 years. Latest styles to suit all. UNREPEATABLE GIVE-AWAY PRICE— £4/19/6, £5/19/6, £6/19/6 Each All watches electronically timed, anti-magnetic. Watches for all in the above three price ranges!

TO MAIL ORDER SHOPPERS

These Amazing Values are for 14 DAYS ONLY! All orders must reach us not later than 15th Feb., 1960. A really handsome FREE GIFT is enclosed with all orders over £2 in value. During this Sale everything sent Post and Freight Free—the Greatest Bargains in New Zealand brought right to your door. Cut this advertisement out for easy reference. All orders promptly despatched. Send for Bargain Bulletins.

MONSTER BARGAIN PARCEL

No. 1: Pair Latest German TELEOCULAR BINOCULARS. Ideal race and sports meetings.
No. 2: 2 pairs fine quality 5-year guarantee single WHITE SHEETS or 1 pair doubles.
No. 3: 2 lovely quality large size Gaily Coloured TOWELS.
No. 4: 6 fine quality PILLOW SLIPS.
No. 5: A set of latest German Fine Steel SAWS. 5 different sizes for all different purposes.
No. 6: A beautiful Imported 54 X 54 TABLECLOTH and 6 lovely TABLE MATS.
No. 7: A lovely Surprise Gift for DAD.
No. 8: A lovely Surprise Gift for MUM.
No. 9: A Lovely Surprise Gift for the KIDS.
No. 10: A 24-piece Canteen of Genuine Sheffield Quality CUTLERY . . . Knives, Forks, Spoons.
No. 11: A SPECIAL BONUS FREE GIFT.

UNBELIEVABLE VALUE AT A FRACTION OF ITS TRUE COST! THIS ENTIRE HUGE PARCEL . . .

£7/19/6 POST FREE

ONE PARCEL TO A CUSTOMER ONLY.

Special Monster Bargain Parcel

MAKE IT UP YOURSELF!

Pick out any goods from this advertisement to the value of £26 and you may have them for £21 This applies to all goods advertised and you may make your selection and put them on lay-by if you wish by sending a deposit (minimum £2) and Weekly Payments to suit yourself. Parcel sent on receipt of last payment.

MONSTER CUTLERY SCOOP

44-PIECE CANTEEN SUPER WORLD-LEADING BRAND SHEFFIELD CUTLERY

25-year guarantee E.P.N.S.A.1. in beautiful polished Presentation Cabinet, comprising all necessary Knives, Forks, Spoons, Servers, etc., etc. CRAZY GIVE-AWAY PRICE £15/19/6 Each

This is the Greatest Bargain in Cutlery ever offered in New Zealand! SAVE POUNDS AND POUNDS!

JEWELLERY PARCEL

A delightful assortment of Continental Artificial ... EL

PURE WOOL TRAVEL RUGS

Lovely tartan designs. (State colour preference). So handy for so many purposes. UNDER HALF PRICE £2/15/- EACH

SEND YOUR ORDER NOW TO:—

Miss Grace, c/o SURPLUS AUCTIONS BOX 8665, AUCKLAND, C.3.

Personal Shoppers welcome at our huge store, 5,000 sq. feet packed with hundreds of bargains in all lines—A VISIT WILL SAVE YOU CASH.

FAREWELL to Surplus Auctioneering

Surplus Auctioneering Company and Supplies operated by Rawson Davis (Proprietaries) Limited is now in liquidation. This is the mail order house whose business methods *Consumer Service* was investigating.

The company had three sides to its business—wholesale, retail and mail order. Its merchandise was bought mainly from firms wanting, for various reasons, to clear stocks quickly. It bought and sold cheaply. Cash customers to any of the three Auckland shops had their protection in being able to inspect the goods. Most of these seemed to be shoddy, obviously old and shop-soiled.

It was the mail order customer, however, who could be easily misled. Full-page advertisements in daily Auckland papers and double-pages in weeklies like *Truth* and the *N.Z. Free Lance* proclaimed bargains galore, generally 'for 14 days only'.

Warning signs were there, of course, for the wary customer. Very few of the goods had brand names, though lavishly described as 'world-famous brand' or from a 'top-grade leading manufacturer'. Prices, those 'crazy give-away prices', were absurdly low for the claimed quality of the goods. Guarantees were offered too freely and for too long a period for low-priced products. However, love of a 'bargain', at least on paper, enticed many people to send in orders, and no doubt there were customers who were satisfied with the goods at the prices charged.

There were three main things about which correspondents to *Consumer Service* seemed to be dissatisfied. First, there were long delays in sending goods. Second, when goods were not available Surplus Auctioneering sent credit notes to the customers. In some cases repeated requests for the return of the money were ignored. In one instance a cheque for £6/8/6 was returned only after a solicitor's letter (costing a fifth of the purchase) was sent. The last major complaint was that the goods, when they were sent, were not the quality that the buyer had been led by advertisements to expect. In some cases, said consumers, they were inferior to the point of being unusable.

Buyers, of course, can take civil action against a vendor on any of these points. But most people will not engage in litigation that may cost more than the unsatisfactory goods.

The New Zealand Herald reports that on 22 Feb-

ruary a first meeting of creditors was held in Auckland and Mr Noel Barclay was appointed liquidator by the meeting. Mr Barclay said that the amount owing mail order creditors was given as £20,000, but that records were inadequate and the final figure could well exceed this. No final amount could be given until proof of debts was lodged.

This is an example of how necessary it is to read advertisements—and to listen to them on the air—very carefully.

Carter's Little Liver Pills

For seventy years Carters have sold Little Liver Pills. They must now remove the word LIVER from their label on pills sold in the United States. This was the decision of the United States Court of Appeal last year.

In 1956 the Federal Trade Commission, after 149 hearing sessions lasting over two years, ordered the ban on 'liver'. The pills 'alone or in combination with others', reads the order, 'will have no therapeutic action, effect, or influence, corrective or otherwise, on the liver'. Carters appealed against this decision, but it has been upheld by the Court. In future the product will be known in the States as 'Carter's Little Pills'.

Traditionalists may mourn the passing of the Little Liver Pill, which, though not touching the liver, is a relatively harmless combination of two purgatives. However, this is another step in the battle to get rid of deceptive labelling.

The New Zealand practice? You may still buy Carter's Little LIVER Pills.

In a simple test in the Wellington area Consumer Service *found the 1d. stamp vending machines more reliable than rumour has them, though many were old and difficult to operate, the 6d. machines unsatisfactory, and the new-type 3d. machines on trial in two post offices, good.*

Consumer Service *also found the Post Office authorities aware of the problems and testing out new machines with a view to replacing the unsatisfactory types.*

AFTER HOUR STAMPS

'I missed the Sunday night mail because the stamp machine had broken down.' *Consumer Service* has heard this sort of complaint more than once. A person stranded at a suburban post office after hours with two penny stamps in hand, one stuck in the machine and no more change, can be left with a life-long grudge against Her Majesty's Postal Service. This mishap is relatively trifling, but such breakdowns should not happen. Because stamps are not, as is the custom in many overseas countries, sold in weekend and evening trading shops a stamp service designed mainly for after hours service should be reliable—that is, the machine should not be empty, should produce, and produce easily, the correct number of stamps for the money inserted.

To see if there were any basis for these complaints, *Consumer Service* conducted a sample test of machines in twenty Wellington City and suburban post offices. Four of the more distant suburbs were excluded from the test. Two rounds were made, the first on a weekday and the second 10 days later, on a Sunday afternoon. In all cases except for the machine in Government Buildings the machines were sited in positions available to the public when the Post Offices were closed.

The Penny Machines

These machines are the most widely distributed. Twenty-two post offices were visited on the first round. In two cases, at Kelburn and Adelaide Road, *Consumer Service* missed machines which the Post Office later assured us were inset in the door of the post offices. Any inconvenience here would be to strangers rather than local residents.

On the first round six penny stamps were bought from each of the penny machines. In every case on the 'regular check' each penny produced one stamp; the tester left an interval after inserting each penny and removed the stamp carefully. In some cases the stamp projected so little from the machine mouth that it required all the care of the tester to remove it. While some machines delivered their stamps easily, others were so stiff that it was difficult to remove them without tearing.

A few tests outside the 'regular check' were carried out when the coins were inserted quickly and the stamps removed less carefully. In one case after a quick insertion of six pennies, five penny stamps were delivered, in a second case, four. Some stamps were torn when they were removed from stiff machines.

On the second round of penny machines made late on a Sunday afternoon, machines in three out of the nineteen post offices visited were empty. Each of the other sixteen were checked with three pennies and delivered three penny stamps.

The Sixpenny Machines

When sixpence is inserted in these machines two 3d. stamps should be delivered. Of the thirteen machines located in Wellington, *Consumer Service* tested ten. On

the first round carried out on a weekday, three purchases were made from each machine. Two machines out of the ten were found to be unreliable. One delivered only three threepenny stamps for two sixpences; the other delivered five threepenny stamps for two sixpences, a bonus unlikely to go to the customer who was short stamped as one machine was located at Wellington South post office and the second at Karori. On the second round when sixpence was inserted in each machine, nine out of ten machines were correct, the tenth, at Wellington South, had been removed, obviously for repair.

The Threepenny Machines

Consumer Service found the new-type threepenny machine only at the Chief Post Office. This machine is a completely different pattern from the others, was easy to operate, elegant in appearance and completely reliable on both visits. The Post Office later informed us that there are only sixteen of these installed at present throughout the country and of the sixteen a second is located at Wellington East Post Office. This was tested at a later date, both on a weekday and on a Sunday, and also found reliable.

Conclusions

that with the penny machines each penny yields a penny stamp—provided the purchaser works the machines slowly and carefully.

that the sixpenny machines are sufficiently unreliable to be poor publicity for the Post Office, and should be withdrawn.

that the two threepenny machines located in Wellington at present appear to give satisfactory service.

that the Post Office should take measures to see that machines are kept full over the weekend period.

The fact that some of the machines found to be faulty on the first round were corrected or removed for correction on the second round ten days later shows that the Post Office does service machines constantly. The large number of very old machines in use suggests, however, that repairs might be cut down if they were replaced by new machines.

It is understood that the Post Office issues licences to sell stamps, but little use seems to be made of this facility. The Post Office could provide a useful service for the consumer if it encouraged shops that trade after normal hours, such as dairies, to stock the 4/- book of 3d. and 1d. stamps now sold at post offices.

The Post Office, *Consumer Service* found, is not satisfied with its stamp vending machines, particularly the sixpenny machines. When the new type threepenny machine has been sufficiently proved by trial (it can be adapted to take any coin) all older machines will be gradually replaced.

Stamp vending machines are filled (480 stamps) on Friday afternoon. The Post Office commented that the breaking of the roll inside (often through dampness) and through ill-treatment or vandalism helped to raise the number of 'empty' machines. With machines subject to these hazards in addition to normal use *Consumer Service* wonders whether a weekend check of machines should not be made or perhaps a telephone number shown on the machine so that a defect in the machine could be reported immediately.

Consumer wishes to thank Consumers' Research (Inc.) for the material used in *To Clean a Camera Lens* printed in the summer issue.

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